**Why I am not an atheist**

**Part One** Pastor Mark Schwarzbauer PhD

Family Worship Center 6-23-13

Intro: It is common to question the meaning of life, the existence of God, Right now is somewhat vogue to claim to be an atheist. But is it rational?

**Romans 1:20** For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.

**Part One: To believe or not to believe… that is the question.**

1. From the moment of birth, everyone is trying to make sense of the world.
2. Who is important and how do I get my needs met?
3. Once physical and psychological needs are met we move from self-centered questions to those of meaning.
4. Why am I here? (The Meaning of Life).
5. Where did all this come from? (The Origin of Life).
6. What happens after I die? (The Question of Eternity).
7. What is real? (The Question of Coherency).
8. Any system of belief or unbelief needs to answer these and other questions in a consistent and honest way.
9. To Believe or Not to Believe. (Apologies to William).
10. Some people fail to move beyond psychological needs and build their belief system to meet them.
11. Some people believe or disbelieve for the wrong reasons.
12. For a long time atheists have purported that theists are just trying to get emotional or psychological needs met. Atheists have seen themselves as the only ones who are rational in their beliefs.
13. PAUL C. VITZ, a professor of psychology at New York University, was an atheist until his late 30s. He earned his bachelor's degree at the University of Michigan and his Ph.D. at Stanford. Professor Vitz is the author of Psychology as Religion, and Faith of the Fatherless.[[1]](#footnote-1)
14. Vitz’s study challenges the widespread assumption throughout much of the intellectual community that belief in God is based on irrational, immature needs and wishful thinking, whereas skepticism is derived from a rational, no-nonsense appraisal of the way things really are. Since psychology is a weapon that skeptics have chosen to wield against God, it is not unfair for us to ask the same questions of them.” [[2]](#footnote-2)
15. Vitz says “In summary because of my social needs to assimilate, because of my professional needs to be accepted as an academic psychologist, and because of my personal need for a convenient lifestyle; for all of these needs atheism was simply the best policy… I think these reasons may be the most common by far.”
16. Vitz goes on to examine deeper psychological needs that predispose atheists.
17. “The single most important social influence on the spiritual live of teens is their parents. Fathers in particular have a vital role to play in the spiritual development of their children. In his fascinating books “faith of the fatherless” social scientist Paul Vitz writes that in his study of the world’s most influential atheists (including Friedrich Nietzsche, David Hume, Bertrand Russell, John Paul Sartre, Albert Camus and H. G. Wells), all had one thing in common: defective relationships with their fathers. Moreover, when Vitz studied the lives of influential theists (such as Blaise Pascal, Edmund Burke, Moses Mendelssohn, Soren Kierkegaard, G.K. Chesterton, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer) during those same historical time periods, he found they enjoyed a strong, loving relationship with a father figure.”[[3]](#footnote-3)
18. Last week we covered the epidemic of fatherlessness. It is not a coincidence that since fatherlessness is on the rise the popularity of atheism is on the rise too.
19. Correlation between having a bad father and being mad at God.
20. As a PhD in counseling and a student of behavior I look behind people’s arguments to their motives because motives shape how people interpret, process and present things.
21. Quotes by Harris, Dawkins, Hitchens. I agree with Ravi Zacharias that “There is much more heat than light in their arguments.”
22. The sarcastic vitriol of the new atheist’s leaders like Richard Dawkins Hitchens and Sam Harris, forces me to question why are they acting like Junior High School bullies? I’m a behavioral scientist and their mean spirited attacks tell me much more than their supposed arguments. When someone has to use their level of vitriol and intimidation it suggests inherent weakness in their arguments. – Dr Mark Schwarzbauer.
23. In the end everyone must choose… but choose honestly.

**Part Two: Why I am not an atheist**

1. Most atheists say they base their arguments on intellectual claims but quickly move to their psychological needs and philosophical issues.
2. Death and Suffering ~ How can a loving God allow…
3. Atheists view 1… Martin Bashir, Dateline NBC - “Which of these is true? Either god is all powerful but doesn’t care about the people of Japan and their suffering, or he does care about the people of Japan but he’s not all powerful? Which is it?”
4. Attempting to box in with a straw man argument.
5. The problem of suffering and evil.
6. The third aspect – The all-powerful God indeed love us and cares deeply for all our suffering. And because He indeed loves us He has given us a free will and respects that, allowing us to reap the consequences of our choices. Sometimes we also reap the consequences of other people’s choices as they also reap ours. God sent His Son to deliver us from sin and its consequences. He is the answer, not the cause.
7. God created the world and man without suffering and death… Gen. 1-3.
8. Suffering and death came about because of sin. Genesis 3, Romans 6:23.
9. God sent His one and only Son to pay for our sin. Jesus suffered for us. John 3:16. Isaiah 53.
10. God will ultimately destroy suffering and death. Revelation 21:3-5.
11. “The evidence and empowerment of God.” 8-7-11
12. Atrocities of Religion ~
13. From a Facebook response… “Almost all religious groups infringe on those liberties and equalities. Whether it be subjugating women, enslaving other races, child abuse, incest, rape and all other forms of atrocities. Yes, by all means practice your faith but that does not allow people the right to shove it in others faces or try to make them live by rules that were made up by an imaginary sky man.”
14. My response “Sara, I am not trying to attack you in this apology. I hope I can actually clarify some thought and leave you with encouragement.  
    If we wish to entertain the citing of atrocities we must also contrast atheism; the three main atheistic regimes of the twentieth century; Hitler in Nazi Germany, Stalin in Russia, and Mao in China are responsible for more than 100 million deaths not to mention the most violent abuse of women, horrible racism and more crimes against humanity than can be spoken. In one century they have outdone all the religions in all previous history. No doubt anyone can cite a number of atrocities and lay them at the feet of Christianity. However, Sara there is a very significant difference; Those who would perpetrate such crimes hiding behind “faith” do so antithetically to the teachings of Jesus; Those who commit them under the auspices of atheism do so as a natural extension of atheism. (Mao 75 million, Stalin 43 million, Hitler 20million – conservative estimates).
15. **Foundations that Really Matter ~ October 7, 2012**
16. Nietzsche, son of a pastor and grandson of two pastors, God has died philosophically in the nineteenth century. Therefore all Christian morals must be considered dead too. Nietzsche predicted that God being dead would bring 2 things in the 20th century… 1. **The twentieth century will become the bloodiest century in history 2. A universal madness would break out.**
17. Nietzsche said: "When one gives up the Christian faith, one pulls the right to Christian morality from under one's feet. This morality is by no means self-evident. Christianity is a system, a whole view of things thought out together. By breaking one main concept out of it, the faith in God, one breaks the whole. It stands or falls with faith in God.” (ie If there is no God there is no morality).
18. Hitler promoted Nietzsche – Gave writings to Mussolini and posed by Nietzsche’s bust.
19. Hitler, Stalin and Mao just fulfilled the natural outworking of true atheism.
20. What about secular countries now? It is the remnants of Christianity and Judaism that have preserved them and extends good from them.

**End of Part One:**

1. Former atheist Professor Paul Vitz unmasked atheism showing it is actually based in psychological needs and deficiency and not in rational intellectualism. As a social scientist myself, this is one reason I am not atheist.
2. People like Martin Bashir who grossly distort the arguments make me skeptical of their skepticism. If it is rational truth the atheist purports why do they depend upon faulty forms of logic to defend it? This is the second reason I am not an atheist.
3. Atheists point to the atrocities of religion. Yet, in one century atheist regimes have killed more than all religions in all of history. Such crimes are antithetical to Christianity and the teachings of Jesus. However, as the leader in atheism Nietzsche has pointed out these atrocities are inherent to atheism. For this reason I am not an atheist.

I will have more to share in part two next week.

**Closing…**

**Romans 1:20** For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.

1. The invisible is clearly seen when we are looking at it without psychological distortions and deficiencies.
2. Understood by looking at creation you see God’s power and authority. (Design or Time and Chance).
3. Leaves people without excuse.

**Discussion Items and Questions for Home and Small Group**

1. What are the three reasons Professor Vitz states are “the most common by far” for people to be atheists?
2. What is the deeper reason that Professor Vitz exposes?
3. In your own words summarize the answer for the question of death and suffering.
4. How would you now answer when someone says religion has caused too much suffering and killed too many people?
5. Pray to be used by God to speak truth with love.

1. Recommend hearing him on youtube <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JgWajMM2HzU> part one of five. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Beyond Opinion by Ravi Zacharias, c2007 Thomas Nelson Publishers. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-3)